

Billing Code of Practice



If you have questions about your account or water services we are ready to help. When you contact us it would help if you have your account number to hand. To protect your account, we can only discuss account information with the account holder or nominated person.

Web: www.water.ie

Twitter: [@IWCare](https://twitter.com/IWCare)

Irish Water

PO Box 860

South City Delivery Office

Cork City

Billing and general queries

9am-5.30pm Mon-Fri

Telephone: **Callsave 1850 448 448** or **+353 1 707 2824**

Minicom: **LoCall 1890 378 378**

(for hearing impaired customers with their own minicom equipment)

Water supply queries and emergencies

24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Telephone: **Callsave 1850 278 278** or **+353 1 707 2828**

Minicom: **LoCall 1890 378 378**

(for hearing impaired customers with their own minicom equipment)

Please note that the rates charged for 1850 (Callsave) and 1890 (LoCall) numbers may vary across different service providers. Calls made using mobiles may be more expensive.

This publication is available in Braille, on CD and in large text format on request by calling 1850 448 448.

Safeguarding our water for our future

02 October 2017

Introduction

Irish Water is responsible for providing and managing public water and wastewater services on a national basis. You can expect the highest standards of service from Irish Water. However, like any other business, we rely on customers to pay bills on time so that we can continue to develop an efficient, effective and essential resource for the entire country.

This Code of Practice explains the bills we send you for water services (for domestic customers only). It covers the following:

- billing for metered customers;
- billing for unmetered customers;
- the different ways you can pay; and
- how we work with customers who may be finding it difficult to pay a bill on time.

We also have a Code of Practice for vulnerable customers, communications, complaint handling, metering and network operations. You can request a copy by calling us on **Callsave 1850 448 448** or **+353 1 707 2824** or you can visit **www.water.ie**

References within this Code of Practice to Water Services include the public water and wastewater services that we provide.

Our Commitment

- We will promote this Code of Practice so you can easily get a copy.
- We will train our staff to deliver the services outlined in this Code and will keep our training up to date.
- We will issue clear and timely bills to all our customers.
- We will provide customers with a choice of ways to pay bills.
- We will deal with all customer enquiries courteously and fairly.

- We will keep all the information given to us by customers in the strictest confidence.
- We will work with customers in finding a suitable plan for settling bills.
- We will monitor the service we give to make sure we are keeping our commitments.

Your Water Services bill

Irish Water will provide clear, easy to understand and accurate bills to our customers. We will ensure that all charges for water services are capped at the appropriate charge in accordance with the Water Services Act, 2014 and the Water Charges Plan (available to download at www.water.ie) as approved by the Commission for Regulation of Utilities and based on one of the following:

- a) actual meter readings carried out by Irish Water or its agents;
- b) customer meter readings;
- c) estimated readings - where Irish Water have not been able to visit and/or read the water meter, an estimated bill can be issued based on historic or assessed consumption rates for the account holder's premises;
- d) a default charge (where there is insufficient information provided by the customer); or
- e) an unmetered, fixed charge (where water meters are not installed).

Please note: The volume of wastewater produced is assumed to be the same volume as the water supplied.

Irish Water will provide an explanation of all the charges on the bill.

If you have any queries regarding your bill, you are welcome to contact us on

Callsave 1850 448 448 or +353 1 707 2824.

Frequency of bills

Metered customers

Irish Water will endeavour to read customer meters and issue bills quarterly (every three months) for water and/or wastewater usage. Exceptions to this may exist for the first and final bills in line with start and end dates of water/wastewater service provision.

Unmetered customers

If the premises is unmetered, Irish Water will ensure that bills are issued quarterly in line with the Water Charges Plan. Exceptions to this may exist for the first and final bills in line with the start and end dates of water/wastewater service provision.

Estimated bills

Customers with meters installed at their premises will receive a bill which shows their water usage for the billing period. Meters will be read through a radio signal picked up by an Irish Water agent using drive-by Automatic Meter Reading (AMR) technology. It is unlikely that customers with a meter will receive an estimated reading. However, if customers receive two consecutive estimated readings, Irish Water will arrange to have the meter read manually at no extra cost to the customer and any necessary adjustment will be applied to the customer's account.

Late bills

Where we become aware of an unexpected delay in the production of a bill that will exceed one full billing cycle, we will, where reasonably practicable, make contact with customers to explain the reasons for the delay and the actions being taken to remedy the situation.

Payment options

Irish Water offers a range of options for you to pay your bill:

- **Direct Debit**

You can sign up to Direct Debit by completing the Direct Debit Mandate form on the back of your bill, call us on **Callsave 1850 448 448** or **+353 1 707 2824** to request a form or you can download a form online at **www.water.ie**. You can either pay your entire bill or pay on a monthly basis.

- **Standing Orders**

You may set up a Standing Order to pay your water bill, subject to a minimum amount of €5 per payment.

- **Online Banking/Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT)**

You can pay through your bank's online payment option. To do this you will need your Irish Water account details and the following:

IBAN: IE29 AIBK 9333 8464 3085 94

BIC: AIBKIE2D

Remember to quote your 10 digit Irish Water account number (including leading zeros), found on the front of your bill, in the reference field.

- **Debit or Credit Card**

You can call us on **Callsave 1850 448 448** or **+353 1 707 2824** to make card payments. Please have your Irish Water account number and your Water Point Reference Number (WPRN) to hand. You can find both of these numbers on the front of your bill.

- **Mybills.ie**

You can pay through An Post's free online service at **www.mybills.ie** by using your debit card.

- **Cash**

You can pay your bill at any retail outlet where you see the PayPoint, Payzone or PostPoint signs or at any Post Office.

Please bring the payment slip on the bottom of your bill with you. In these outlets you can pay your bill or make a part payment of a minimum value of €5.

- **Cheque**

You can post a cheque, together with a completed payment slip (on the bottom of your bill), to: **Customer Services, Irish Water, PO Box 860, South City Delivery Office, Cork City, Ireland.**

- **Household Budget Scheme**

Irish Water will have this facility available to customers in 2016. It allows people who receive certain social welfare payments to pay a regular amount towards their Irish Water bills from their social welfare payments which will be deducted at source. This scheme generally has to be supplemented by additional customer payments to meet total bill costs. It is operated by the Department of Social Protection through An Post.

Please do not send cash by post. Please allow up to five days for your payments to appear on your account.

Managing your account

You can view and manage your account online, which allows you to:

- view and pay your bill;
- view previous bills and transactions;
- sign up for paperless billing;
- sign up for Direct Debit;

- add properties to your account.

To sign up for a My Water online account you need to have:

- registered and confirmed your details with Irish Water; and
- received a bill from Irish Water (which contains your WPRN and Account Number).

Visit **www.water.ie** and have your WPRN and Account Number to hand.

Automated telephone service

If you prefer you can phone the automated telephone service to check your balance and make payments. This service is available 365 days a year. Please have your Irish Water account number and your WPRN to hand when you call. You can find both of these numbers on the front of your bill.

Charges and tariffs

The Water Services (No.2) Act 2013 and the Water Services Act 2014 provide the framework for the Water Charges Plan, which sets out the charges that Irish Water may charge to a dwelling until 31 December 2018. For full details, please see the Water Charges Plan (as approved by the Commission for Regulation of Utilities), on our website **www.water.ie**

Our charges and tariffs are regulated by the Commission for Regulation of Utilities. In the event that Irish Water is advised of a change in the charges and/or tariffs, customers will receive 30 days prior notice of the change.

Account details

If you would like to contact our customer service help desk, please note that we can only discuss the account details with those named as account holder, unless:

- you have given us consent to discuss your account with a third party; or
- you have nominated a person under our '**Domestic vulnerable customer Code of Practice**'.

Please see the Code of Practice for vulnerable customers for more information on how to register.

Special services register

If you have registered for special services, you can choose to receive your bill in a number of different ways, including:

- Braille;
- electronically, by registering for online account management at **www.water.ie**;
- by having a member of our staff talk you through your most recent bill (a 'Talking bill'); or
- through someone you have named to represent you (a nominated person) and they receive a bill on your behalf.

Hearing difficulties

If you have a hearing difficulty and you have minicom equipment you can get in touch with us on **LoCall 1890 378 378**.

Moving home and closing your account

If you are moving house and would like to close your account at the home you are leaving, please make sure you contact us and tell us 10 working days in advance.

Please note that you will be liable for water charges at the premises where you are registered with us until you contact us, asking us to close the account at that property, and telling us the date you will be leaving the property.

If a meter is installed at the property you are leaving, then we will need to find out the final meter reading through:

- an estimated read; or
- an actual reading taken by you; or
- a special reading (where we visit your premises to read the meter).

For unmetered customers, we will pro rate the appropriate maximum charge to bill customers until the date of departure from the premises.

We will issue a final bill for water services at the property you are leaving within six weeks of you asking us to close your account. We will send this to the new address you have given us.

When you move in to your new home, you should remember to check the estimated 'move-in' read with us. This meter reading will be the opening meter reading for your first bill in your new home

You can also give us a meter reading when you move into the new property.

If you change address you may choose to keep the same account details for the new address. Simply call us before moving from your old premises to tell us to close the account at that address and give us your new details.

Premises with no registered account holder

Where an account holder closes an account and no new account is registered to that property, the liability for water services will fall to the owner of the property. We will work with relevant agencies to identify the ownership of the property receiving water services from us.

We will issue a notice, in writing, to the owner to tell them that they are now liable for the water services charges.

Customers experiencing payment difficulties

Payment Plans

We urge you to please tell us straight away if you are having difficulty in paying your water services bill.

The sooner you let us know, the easier it will be for us to offer you help and advice. We will be as flexible as possible in trying to agree a payment plan with you in order to settle your account.

When considering a payment plan with our customers, we will take into account the value of the debt and the period of time outstanding, the previous payment history with Irish Water and any other material factors concerning individual customers. Irish Water will take account of the individual customer's ability to pay when agreeing any repayment arrangement, by payment plan or other method and confirm with the account holder that arrangements are manageable.

Support agencies

We will treat all information you give us in the strictest confidence. There are a number of state agencies, state sponsored bodies and recognised charities that offer household budgeting advice. These include the Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) – **www.mabs.ie**

We will work with the relevant state agencies or state sponsored bodies, recognised charities or other financial advisors to handle any arrears if you choose this option and give us permission to do so.

Late payment charge

Late payment charges will apply, as set out in the Water Services Act, 2014 and in our Terms and Conditions of Water Services.

Customer credit refunds

Where a customer requests a credit refund, where one exists on their account, this can be processed, once it exceeds €15. This can be arranged via Electronic Fund Transfer refund where the customer has signed up to direct debit or a cheque may be issued. We will refund this within 15 working days of the customer request.

Complaints

At Irish Water, we are committed to delivering the best service possible. If you are unhappy with any part of our service, we encourage you to let us know and we will do everything we can to resolve the matter quickly and to your satisfaction.

Call us on **Callsave 1850 448 448** or **+353 1 707 2824** (9am-5.30pm, Monday to Friday) and we will try and resolve any problems over the phone.

Or write to us at:

Irish Water
PO Box 860
South City Delivery Office
Cork City

Email: customerservice@water.ie

We aim to settle any complaint as quickly and as fairly as possible. Within five working days of receiving your complaint, we will offer you a resolution or an outline plan of the steps we need to take to achieve a satisfactory resolution to your complaint (under normal conditions).

We are committed to resolving all complaints within two months (where the customer is engaging with Irish Water).

We will keep you informed on progress we are making in resolving your complaint. We have a separate '**Code of Practice on complaint handling**'.

To request a copy, please call us on **Callsave 1850 448 448** or **+353 1 707 2824** or view online at **www.water.ie**

How to contact us

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South Delivery Office
Cork City

Billing and general queries:

Callsave 1850 448 448 or **+353 1 707 2824**
9am-5.30pm, Monday to Friday.

Water Supply queries and emergencies:

Callsave 1850 278 278 or **+353 707 2828**
24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Minicom: **LoCall 1890 378 378**
(for hearing impaired customers with their own Minicom equipment).

Please note that the rates charged for 1850 (Callsave) and 1890 (LoCall) numbers may vary across different service providers. Calls made from mobiles may be more expensive.

Email: **customerservice@water.ie**

Twitter: **@IWCare**

Website: **www.water.ie**

Other useful contacts

The **Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS)** is a free, confidential and independent service for people in debt or in danger of getting into debt.

MABS Helpline: 076 107 2000

Monday to Friday 9.00am to 8.00pm

Email: helpline@mabs.ie

Web: www.mabs.ie

Visiting your home

Our staff and agents are trained to always identify who they are and who they are representing. They will always show you their identity card.

Below is a series of sensible steps you should follow when dealing with people calling to your home:

- Always look through a window or door viewer before opening the door;
- Only open your door after connecting a door chain lock or placing your foot behind the door;

- Switch on outside lights when it is dark;
- Request and examine identity cards;
- Always think 'safety' – do not leave strangers alone on your doorstep while you go into another room. Always close the door if you need to do this. Do not leave strangers alone in your home;
- Take precautions – if you are unsure or suspicious, please refuse access.